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## SOCIALIZING LATIN

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How to make Latin pleasing and attractive to high-school pupils was a problem that had long been vexing my mind. Could the work be readjusted or extended in a way that would appeal to them, make them desire to take it up, and having taken it up continue it for the four years of the course? Our school was suffering as every school is, I imagine, from the enticements of the so-called practical studies—manual training and sewing, for example—that bring forth definite, tangible fruits and overshadow the less obvious results, the cultural values, gained from our humanistic discipline.

At a state teachers' convention I slipped into an English conference where a speaker was just declaring, "Our English must be made to suit modern demands. To get best results we must treat our subject from the standpoint of the class as a social group. English must be thoroughly socialized." And I thought to myself, "That is the very thing we must do for our Latin—we must make it meet modern demands and thoroughly socialize it."

But how could it be done? The leaven hidden in the meal began to ferment. It was the era of exhibits, and after my return to Battle Creek one of our domestic art instructors remarked to me, "Well, you can be thankful there is nothing in your department to *exhibit*." Her remark pricked deeper than she thought, and we resolved to have an exhibit and to make it an exhibit worthy the name. Using Miss Sabin's book, *The Relation of Latin to Practical Life*, as a basis we set to work, and it became more and more a marvel to me every day to see the way the pupils took up the work and how eager they were to help. We mounted our exhibits on dark gray charts, which were made more durable by black cloth binding an inch wide around the edges, the lettering being done by such students as showed some ability along that line. As a final result we had about forty very attractive charts. These included:

The seals of the various states with the mottoes translated into English.

A chart of birds with translation of their names.

Lists of English words in common use with derivation from Latin.

Advertisements, such as for Atlas cement, Corona typewriter, vulcanizing supplies for automobiles, the Goodyear tire with its Mercury wing, and others too numerous to mention.

A physiology chart with lacrimal glands, pericardium, and various muscles and glands with Latin or Greek derivation explained.

Law phrases in Latin with their translation.

Various coins with Latin mottoes.

Modern inventions, flowers, stars, constellations, etc., having names of Greek or Latin origin. Inventions, such as interurban cars, bicycles, hydroaëroplanes, etc., were shown in pictures with name derivation attached. Names of stars and constellations were accompanied by explanations. One of the most beautiful was a chart containing the mounted pictures of some of our common flowers—e.g., sunflower, hyacinth—and a short account of the origin of the name of each.

These charts were suspended by heavy cord from the molding of the library where our exhibit was given and hung at the level of the eye, so there was no straining of the neck or eyes to read them. Collections of postcards of scenes in and about Rome and Pompeii were mounted and proved very interesting, also postcards of gods and goddesses in marble and bronze and famous pictures bearing on Roman life.

The long library tables were used to display such things as a peasant's hut made of plaster of Paris, covered with a realistic thatched roof; a Roman trireme; a Roman scroll; a writing-tablet with wax and a stylus for writing; various models of standards and weapons. In one corner on a sand table several boys studying Caesar had modeled an actual battle and the storming of a walled town. The town, showing formation of the wall, occupied one side, and evergreens indicated the wooded slopes wherein mounted officers lurked. The figures of the officers were made from light cardboard and modeled after the warriors shown in the colored

plates of the textbooks, with realistic coloring, and were provided with standards to make them stand upright. There was a *testudo* also, and various legionary soldiers, made as the mounted officers above. There were mounted troops and machines for hurling stones, great towers and scaling-ladders, while gallant defenders of the town manned the walls and fought off the assailants. Caesar's famous bridge was also there.

Through the kindness of Professor Kelsey we were able to exhibit various vases and other antiquities taken from the university collection. An account of each was furnished, so that one lad was able to explain this exhibit intelligently to the visiting public. There was also a model of a Roman house, so realistic one could almost hear the echo of the *Cave canem* at the threshold. Various small pieces of statuary were on exhibition, being loaned by interested people about town, and pictures, and Roman lamps, and candlesticks as well.

Boys and girls dressed in togas took charge of the various sections and explained them to the visitors. The exhibit was held three afternoons and evenings. The general public had been invited, and it availed itself of the opportunity to see what we could find in our department of interest to it. It was a matter of great surprise to see the mixed assembly which gathered. The patron whom I most liked to see there was the man or woman who came to me and said, "Now, Miss MacKenzie, I have never had a word of Latin and know nothing whatever about your subject. Will you please take me round and show me just what you mean by this exhibit?" In every case, before the rounds had been made, that person was not only interested but keenly alive to the bearing of this so-called dead language on modern times. The exhibit served to waken just the kind of interest we had hoped for, and the boys in particular began to catch the vision of its wonderful possibilities.

The following year an exhibit seemed hardly capable of meeting the general demand for something by the Latin department. After considerable thought, a play was decided on and the *Saccus malorum* by Professor Schlicher was the one chosen. Our principal seemed skeptical about getting the pupils to learn the parts in Latin, but

not one person refused when asked to take a certain part. Each participant was drilled separately, and each speech was translated by him, as well as the speeches preceding and following, so that he would get the general meaning. Then each speech was learned in Latin with the proper expression of tone and voice. At first this was hard to attain, but when it was pointed out that each actor must make his speech and action so accord that the audience could follow the play, just as "movie" actors do, they caught the idea, and from then on it was *facillimum factu*.

The costumes were regulation togas made by the pupils themselves, and the sandals and ornaments were made according to Roman pictures studied for that purpose.

Some very good amateur talent was displayed, and when the play was given one afternoon in the high-school auditorium we had a packed house. So general was the demand by parents who could not attend the afternoon performance that it was repeated a couple of weeks later in the evening for the modest price of ten cents, and again we had a big crowd.

This year the problem again arose as to what to give, and the much more pretentious play, *Dido, the Phoenician Queen*, by Professor Miller, of the University of Chicago, was decided upon.

The main characters were taken by the Virgil class, the attendants of the queen and the band of Aeneas by the underclassmen. The story was read from a regular Roman scroll by Virgil himself dressed in a toga. Dr. Miller's play is in English and is a splendid translation and dramatization of Book IV of the *Aeneid*; but it proved too long for the pupils to learn in the limited time at their disposal, so we changed it by having Virgil read the story, the pupils acting it out in pantomime. The play was given before a crowded house, and the pupils acted their parts unusually well despite the fact that the costumes ordered did not arrive, and the preceding afternoon all the players had fallen to and made the costumes for the company. When this was explained to the audience it was very lenient, and even the sailors in too modern togs did not destroy the enthusiasm; and the way the actors rose to meet the difficulty and overcame it was very praiseworthy. The amount

left after our expenses, which will be very light, will go to the Y.M.C.A. War Service Fund.

Truly this warlike year has brought the boy student of Caesar into his own. With wars and fresh rumors of wars and modern tactics common subjects of conversation, Caesar is no longer a bugbear. Recently in my Caesar class we were reading of Galba, the young lieutenant sent by Caesar to open the pass through the Alps, to whom it was left to his own judgment whether he should spend the winter there or not. The town of Octodurus, with its geography and physical characteristics, was studied. The disposition of the two halves of the town, then the demand for grain, and the information the next morning that the enemy had evacuated their half of the town, the startling news that the heights were held by the enemy and Galba's forces were in a trap, all were noted. The class was divided into two opposing factions, the *pro*-Galbaites and the *cons*, and if ever a general and his actions were examined, Galba was certainly "buffeted about."

The stupidity of *any* general picking out a town down in a valley that could so easily be surrounded, said the *cons*, showed his unfitness for his task; his carelessness in allowing the enemy to make their getaway under the cover of night showed he did not know how to guard his army; and the further fact that the enemy had possession of the advantageous heights about the town showed criminal negligence and utter unfitness for generalship. They further contended that in the last sally it was not through any great skill on Galba's part that he fought his way through and won the doubtful victory, but a mere chance stumbled on in his blundering way.

The *pros* had some hard problems to meet, but they met them royally. They contended that Galba had chosen Octodurus because it was well supplied with grain and hence advantageous. Although nothing was said about guards being left on the heights, they knew he must have had them and, when pressed for proof, declared that the adverb *subito* proved it. The sentence read, "Galba was *suddenly* informed," which proved that his guards had been surprised and overcome by superior forces; but some one or more had escaped and come breathlessly in to inform him of his plight. The fact that Galba finally formed a successful plan to get

his men out of the almost-trap showed his marvelous sagacity, and proved that Caesar had not misplaced his confidence when he chose Galba as his agent. Furthermore, the most ardent *pro* asserted that Caesar must have thought this a wonderful feat for any general to accomplish, or he would not have related the matter with so much detail.

So the Italian battle front has attained a new significance, as well as the campaigns in Gaul, and from my two large Caesar classes not a boy has dropped out. This does not mean that the drill on forms has relaxed, but there is the added zest of knowing there is a problem to face and seeing how each leader acts under the circumstances.

Military weapons have also come in for their share as objects of interest, and when a new weapon is mentioned as used by Caesar the boys search out its descendant and use in modern warfare. Caesar, from being one of hardest years to teach, has become much easier if not the easiest, and personally there is nothing I like better than to develop the various campaigns and see the pupils get not only constructions but the definite military objectives accomplished by each.

The war has driven many refugees to our shores, and fortunately for us this year we have a Bulgarian boy in the Caesar class who lived not more than twenty miles from Saloniki and has a number of postcards of his country showing Roman remains. Recently he consented to tell the class of his country, of the Roman architecture and coins and vases found near his home, and of the ruins among which he played and hunted for buried treasure. He also is an adept in the use of the four-foot sling and demonstrated his ability for the class.

Apropos of the war times, there has been recently formed by the boys of our high school a Junior Council of National Defense which has proved a very active factor in such campaigns as the Thrift Stamp sale and the junior Red Cross drive, and boys from the Latin department have been the moving spirits in the council and its activities.

Recently the little boy in the house where I reside, who is eleven years of age, entered the junior high school and started Latin. His parents were in despair and the lad himself thoroughly discouraged

because it proved so hard for him. Being called into council, I tested him out to find where the trouble lay and immediately discovered that the lad had not had any technical English grammar. He did not know a noun from a verb, and an object was an unknown thing, while the copula and its following construction were as Greek to him. He has always been ranked as a splendid student, so I am not taking an exceptional case; and this is the same difficulty all school teachers have to meet in beginning Latin classes.

A new first-year Latin book came recently to my desk for perusal—*Beginning Latin Book*, by Albert S. Perkins, of Boston, Massachusetts. It suggested a very extensive system of derivative notebooks. I have not looked it over very carefully yet, but it contains an idea we have been working out in our Latin department in Battle Creek. After such words as *trans*, *sub*, *inter*, *per*, etc., have been developed and the meaning brought out, the pupil begins a hunt for words in magazines, books, or newspapers having these prefixes. The study has proved not only interesting but very instructive. At a recent examination one exercise was to break up certain given words into their various parts, give the Latin meaning of the parts, and then, putting them together, give the English meaning—subjugate, subterranean, intramural, extramural, submarine, etc. The pupils also keep a list of words found interesting in their reading from the standpoint of Latin, and we have come across some very interesting words and have increased our vocabularies accordingly. A few minutes, ten at the outside, devoted to this on Friday or some day when we have finished our assigned work, serves to keep the pupils interested, actively and profitably.

These are a few of the more potent factors which the Latin department of the Battle Creek High School has emphasized in socializing Latin. Our aim is to enable the active, discerning mind, while grasping and assimilating Latin forms, to see that definite results are really being attained from this study. In the meantime the class unconsciously becomes a social center, and the desired result is secured.